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Classified By: Ambassador C. Martinez, reasons 1.4 (b),(d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. Contenders to be the Movement for Multiparty Democracy presidential candidate for 2011 include party stalwarts, Mwanawasa loyalists, and outsiders. Sitting Vice President Banda is a long shot. With national elections still years away, the current strong contenders are those closest to President Mwanawasa: First Lady Maureen Mwanawasa, Home Affairs Minister Ronnie Shikapwasha, and former Vice President Lupando Mwape. End summary.

[1](#)2. (U) Introduction: As President Mwanawasa begins the second year of his second and final five-year term in office, ambitious party cadres within the ruling Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) have already begun to turn their focus to the 2011 presidential election. The MMD's firm grip on the levers of power in Zambia make it the party to beat in [1](#)2011. The party's national congress, tentatively scheduled for 2010, would be the natural forum for anointing Mwanawasa's successor both as president of the MMD and of Zambia. President Mwanawasa in recent months has stirred the pot of speculation by saying that he would not rule out a candidate from outside the party (ref C), then announcing that he had asked the MMD National Executive Committee (NEC) permission to name his preferred successor during its next meeting (ref B). More recently, party spokesperson Benny Tetamashimba said that the MMD had frozen campaigning for the party presidency and that President Mwanawasa would continue to be party president until the party identified a candidate for the 2011 presidential election. The party's presidential candidate, Tetamashimba said, would become the party's president as well. Whatever the process for choosing a candidate turns out to be, there are many candidates waiting in the MMD wings. Following is a brief survey of potential MMD candidates.

MMD Stalwarts

[1](#)3. (U) Dr. Katele Kalumba: Kalumba is the MMD National Secretary and a member of parliament for a remote district

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in Luapula province. A former Minister (Health, 1996-98), Home Affairs (1998-99) and Finance (1999-2001), during the Chiluba administration, Kalumba was elected National Secretary in 2005 despite opposition from President Mwanawasa

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and the NEC. Kalumba has a solid base of support from his home Luapula province and wields enormous authority and influence over party structures and budgets, but he is also facing seventeen charges of corruption relating to abuse of office and theft of public funds during his time as Minister of Finance. Kalumba also stands accused of diversion of public funds amounting to two million Kwacha (approximately USD 500,000) that were siphoned out of the National Assembly accounting system. Both cases against Kalumba are currently making their way through the courts, but he reportedly is setting up campaign teams in Luapula, Northern and Copperbelt provinces. Kalumba has an undergraduate degree in social work from Washington University in St. Louis and a doctorate from the University of Toronto.

14. (SBU) Michael Mabenga: Mabenga is the National Chairman of the MMD and a member of Parliament from the Western province constituency of Mulobezi. As Defense Minister during President Mwanawasa's first term of office, Mabenga was removed from office in August 2003 following a Supreme Court decision affirming a finding of electoral malpractice committed by Mabenga during his 2001 election to Parliament. Mabenga was accused of diverting 30 million Kwacha (approximately USD 7500) in Constituency Development Funds to finance his campaigns. Despite a Supreme Court order that Mabenga be investigated and prosecuted for the misappropriation of funds, police did not act on the case. In 2005, President Mwanawasa announced that the government could not proceed with the case against Mabenga because of the death of a key prosecution witness. Interestingly, when Finance Deputy Minister Jonas Shakafuswa recently said that MMD leaders who were linked to corruption allegations should resign because they were bringing the party's name into disrepute, Mabenga reacted by saying that he was not affected by that statement because he had neither been arrested nor convicted in a court of law (Comment: Such are the narrow definitions of "clean" in the Zambian political context).

Mwanawasa Insiders/Loyalists

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15. (SBU) Lupando Mwape: Mwape is currently Zambia's ambassador to China and previously served as Vice President of Zambia from October 2004 to October 2006. Mwape is unfailingly loyal to President Mwanawasa, who saved Mwape from political ignominy after he lost the election for MMD provincial chairman for Northern Province in 2004. Mwanawasa subsequently appointed Mwape as provincial minister and four months later as vice president. Mwape lost his bid to retain his seat in the National Assembly in the September 2006 tripartite elections, which meant he could not continue serving as Vice President. His failure to win a constituency raises some questions about his electability to national office.

16. (SBU) Inonge Mbikusita Lewanika: Lewanika is currently serving as the Zambian Ambassador to the United States, a position she has held since 2002. She has been nominated by Zambia as a candidate for Chair of the African Union Commission. Lewanika began her career with UNICEF, ending up in 1990 as the Regional Adviser for Women and Child Development for West and Central Africa. A founding member of the MMD in 1991, Lewanika resigned from the party in 1993 when allegations of corruption began to surface against the ruling party. In 1996 she formed Agenda for Zambia, which she represented in Parliament until 2001. She ran as a presidential candidate on the Agenda for Zambia ticket in 2001, but lost to Mwanawasa, who subsequently nominated her to be Ambassador for OAU Affairs within the Foreign Ministry and then as Ambassador to the United States, where she has been recognized as one of the more engaged and effective Ambassadors from the region. Lewanika went to high school and college in the United States and holds a Ph.D. from New

York University. Her father was once the Paramount Chief, or Litunga, of the Lozi people in Western Province. Lewanika has a reputation as an honest leader who is dedicated to poverty reduction, but her tribal background in the Western Province Royal Establishment and extensive amounts of time spent outside of Zambia may work against her.

¶7. (U) Ronnie Shikapwasha: Shikapwasha currently serves as Minister of Home Affairs and has been a prominent member of Mwanawasa's cabinet since 2003. He is a first cousin to the First Lady and is a member of the president's kitchen cabinet of advisers. Shikapwasha originally served as Minister of Home Affairs from 2003-2005, then as Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2005-October 2006 before returning again to Home Affairs. Shikapwasha has a military background, having retired from the Air Force as a Lieutenant General in ¶1997. He is also an ordained Minister, but somewhat ironically has been very open about being a womanizer.

¶8. (C) Maureen Mwanawasa: Maureen Mwanawasa has always been a strong force in her husband's decision-making, and a recent up-tick in her media profile has led to speculation that she might be planning to try and follow in her husband's footsteps. A lawyer by profession, Mwanawasa established the Maureen Mwanawasa Community Initiative (MMCI) in 2002 to assist the rural poor and vulnerable women and children. In 2002, a scandal emerged involving preferential contracting procedures in an oil deal involving Zambezi Oil. The First Lady, who had been involved in the deal and who opposition leader Michael Sata alleged was pushing for oil imports from Iran, quietly withdrew from the deal and the furor died down. Sata supposedly has some damaging information about the First Lady's involvement in the Zambezi Oil scandal, and in 2005 he blamed a critical fuel shortage in Zambia on Mwanawasa's oil dealings.

¶9. (SBU) Mwanawasa's work through the MMCI has been criticized as primarily politically motivated, and in 2002 President Mwanawasa intervened to block a parliamentary probe into his wife's use of aid donations. Concerns about the motives behind MMCI donations in key constituencies immediately before by-elections led to changes in the electoral code of conduct in 2006. Elections observers noted that the changes in the code didn't make much difference, as liberal MMCI donations showed up in Northern and Luapula provinces where the MMD was in close races with the opposition Patriotic Front. Mwanawasa's work with MMCI has given her wide name recognition and enabled her to establish links with the rural poor. In the last presidential election, the bulk of the MMD's support came from poor rural areas.

¶10. (SBU) In December 2006, Mrs. Mwanawasa received the International Hope Award from the YWCA in New York in recognition of her work on HIV/AIDS, and in January 2007, she was elected president of the Organization of African First Ladies' Associations. She also just participated in the Saddleback Summit in the U.S. to commemorate World AIDS

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Day. Recent press coverage of Mrs. Mwanawasa donating water pumps (as a local Catholic bishop commented to poloff, "she was giving out seven foot-pumps - why bother covering such a non-event?"), and making appearances at traditional ceremonies have increased speculation that the First Lady is looking to make a run for president. Mrs. Mwanawasa is also said to be consulting with party leaders and traditional chiefs about the possibility of running for president.

The Outsiders

¶11. (U) Clive Chirwa: Chirwa recently emerged as an aspiring candidate, having joined the MMD only in September 2007. Chirwa is a college engineering professor who has lived in

the UK for the past 17 years, and his announcement in November 2007 (ref A) that he would seek the MMD presidency ruffled feathers within the MMD. Chirwa is a relative unknown and so far the only substantive issues he has raised for debate revolve around transportation and transportation infrastructure, his academic and consulting specialties. Chirwa's candidacy may have something to with the MMD's announcement that the party was freezing campaigning for the MMD presidency.

¶12. (SBU) Nevers Mumba: Mumba is currently president of the Reform Party, which he formed in 2005. Mumba has an interesting history, having gained public attention first as a television evangelist and then moving on to politics when God told him to save Zambia through the ballot box. Mumba founded the National Citizens Coalition (NCC) in 2001 and ran for president that same year, but garnered only two percent of the vote. In 2003, he dissolved the NCC and joined the MMD; Mwanawasa promptly rewarded him by nominating him to be vice president after firing then-Vice President Enoch Kavindele due to concerns about his involvement in corruption. While Mumba was a relative political unknown at the national level, his former party's platform of fighting corruption and graft made Mumba a natural to bolster Mwanawasa's own corruption fight. In October 2004, however, Mwanawasa fired Mumba, ostensibly because Mumba made "embarrassing and careless" remarks about links between opposition parties and the Democratic Republic of Congo. However, many observers believed that Mumba was fired because of his clear ambition and popularity. Mumba was expelled from the MMD in 2005 and formed the Reform Party, but he has met and mended fences with Mwanawasa since then. Mumba has a small political base, however, and his history with the MMD is an obstacle to a serious run for the presidency on the MMD ticket.

The Long Shot

¶13. (SBU) Rupiah Banda: Banda is currently serving as Mwanawasa's vice president. A former Minister of Foreign Affairs and long-time United National Independence Party (UNIP) activist, Banda is 70 years old and was called from retirement by President Mwanawasa in 2006. In contrast to Mwanawasa, Banda is dynamic, personable and charming, but he has very little support within the MMD (which he joined in 2006) and his age is likely to be a factor against him (Note: the latter negatives are likely one reason Mwanawasa chose him as Vice President in the first place).

¶14. (C) Comment: Clearly there is no lack of presidential contenders within the MMD. There is limited history to go on - Mwanawasa is the country's third president since independence, and in the last transition then-President Frederick Chiluba had the final word on his successor in ¶2001. After a rocky start with MMD cadres and a narrow and disputed in the 2001 elections, Mwanawasa has built support within the MMD and the population, and the MMD's more convincing wins in the tripartite elections are testament to Mwanawasa's gains. At this point, Mwanawasa insiders such as Ronnie Shikapwasha, the First Lady, and Lupando Mwape appear to have the best chances of becoming the presidential candidate, but much can change in four years. End comment.
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